



ONTOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF ISLAMIC STUDIES: A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REVELATION AND REASON IN CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT DISCOURSE

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Abstract:

The ontology of Islamic studies is a philosophical foundation that serves to explain the essence of Islam in its transcendental, humanitarian, cosmological, and socio-historical dimensions. This study uses a qualitative approach with a philosophical analysis of the latest literature from the past five years. The discussion focuses on the definition of the ontology of Islamic studies, its scope and object of study, the relationship between revelation and reason, and its relevance in the contemporary era. The results of the study indicate that the ontology of Islamic studies positions revelation as an absolute source of knowledge that synergizes with reason to present an integrative and contextual scientific paradigm. In the contemporary era, the ontology of Islamic studies is relevant in strengthening the identity of Islamic scholarship, building ethics in the development of science and technology, and providing solutions to problems in education, morality, and socio-religious matters. Thus, this study confirms that the ontology of Islamic studies is not only theoretical but also applicable in addressing global challenges.

Keywords: *Islamic Epistemology, Contemporary Era, Ontology, Islamic Studie.*

INTRODUCTION

In the philosophy of science, ontology discusses what a science studies. In the context of Islamic studies, ontology relates to the nature of reality that is the object of study, namely Islam as a religion, value system, and civilization. Islamic studies examines not only revealed texts (the Quran and Hadith), but also the manifestation of Islamic teachings in the history, culture, politics, and social life of Muslim societies (Firdaus, Azzahra, & Risnawati, 2022).

Islamic studies is a field of study that focuses not only on normative-theological aspects but also touches on philosophical, methodological, and practical realms (Sain et al., 2024). Within the framework of the philosophy of science, Islamic studies must be examined from three main pillars: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Of these three aspects, ontology plays a fundamental role because it discusses the nature of existence, reality, and the deepest essence of something. Ontology not only questions "what exists" (being) from an Islamic perspective but also explains the structure of reality and the relationships between entities such as God, revelation, humans, nature, and morality. Therefore, ontology can be called the initial foundation that determines the direction of epistemology (how to acquire knowledge) and

axiology (the values and goals of knowledge) in Islamic studies (Mamonto, 2023).

In the classical Islamic scholarly tradition, ontological discourse has been an integral part of philosophical and theological thought. Muslim philosophers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and al-Ghazali have examined the hierarchy of being, the relationship between the necessary being (God) and the possible being (nature and humanity), and how existence has certain levels. These ideas were then developed and debated throughout Islamic intellectual history, both in peripatetic philosophy, illuminationism, and philosophical Sufism. However, in the modern and contemporary era, the study of ontology in Islamic studies is often marginalized by more pragmatic normative-doctrinal or empirical-positivistic approaches. In fact, without adequate ontological understanding, Islamic studies risk losing their philosophical foundation, thus only moving at the textual or instrumental level (Rahman, F., & Muzammil, 2023).

The contemporary scientific context demands a repositioning of ontology in Islamic studies. The development of globalization, advances in digital technology, and the rapid flow of Western thought present complex epistemic challenges. Modern hermeneutics, post-structuralist philosophy, and the secularization of knowledge have given rise to new problems in understanding religious texts and Islamic practice. In this situation, an ontology of Islamic studies is needed to reaffirm the fundamental realities upon which Muslims are founded: the oneness of God, revelation as the source of truth, humans as both subject and caliph, and the universe as God's creation, containing divine values. In other words, ontology serves to maintain the authenticity of Islamic studies while opening up space for dialogue with other scholarly traditions. (Ulum, Azizah, & Utami, 2024)

Beyond theoretical aspects, the ontology of Islamic studies also has practical implications, particularly in education. Recent studies emphasize that Islamic education must be based on an understanding of human nature, natural disposition, and divine values. This demonstrates that ontology is not merely an abstract discourse, but plays a role in shaping the curriculum, learning strategies, and even the interaction patterns between teachers and students. Research by Mujiburrohman & Luthfi (2025), for example, confirms that the ontology of Islamic education serves as the foundation for instilling moral and spiritual values in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), so that students not only understand knowledge cognitively but also internalize Islamic values in their lives. Thus, ontology provides direction for Islamic educational practices, ensuring they remain grounded in the true reality of Islam.

Furthermore, ontological challenges in Islamic studies also arise in the context of the millennial and digital eras. Socio-cultural transformations characterized by individualism, relativism, and pluralism raise new questions about the existence of Islamic values in a global society. Research by Sholicha & El-Yunusi (2024) found that the main problem with Islamic education in the digital era lies in the ontological gap: how to interpret the existence of Islamic values amidst the penetration of global technology and culture? This question demands both philosophical and practical answers so that Islamic education can adapt without losing its identity.

Given the dynamics described above, it can be emphasized that the ontology of Islamic studies has a dual urgency: first, strengthening the philosophical foundations of Islamic scholarship to prevent it from falling into textual or empirical reductionism; second, providing direction for the

development of epistemology and axiology in response to contemporary challenges. Recent research indicates that strengthening ontological aspects is key to bridging the gap between classical Islamic intellectual traditions and modern needs (Ulum, Azizah, & Utami, 2024). Based on this description, this paper focuses on the ontology of Islamic studies by examining the nature of reality from an Islamic perspective, examining its implications for epistemology and axiology, and exploring the contemporary challenges faced. It is hoped that this paper will enrich the philosophical foundations of Islamic studies while making a tangible contribution to the development of Islamic scholarship that is relevant to the dynamics of the times, both at the conceptual and practical levels.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative method with a library research approach, examining classical and contemporary literature related to philosophy, ontology, and Islamic studies. Data sources were obtained from books, journal articles, and relevant previous research, then analyzed descriptively and analytically to illustrate ontological concepts and interpret them in a modern context. Through this method, the research seeks to construct a theoretical synthesis that explains the role of ontology as a philosophical foundation and a practical framework for the development of Islamic epistemology, education, and science in the contemporary era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ontology comes from the Greek words *ontos* (being) and *logos* (science), which etymologically means the science of existence or the essence of something (Harif, Efendi, 2025). In the context of Islamic studies, ontology helps understand the nature of Islam as an object of knowledge. Islam is viewed as divine revelation and a value system that influences the moral behavior and decisions of Muslims (Wijayanti, 2025). Islamic studies positions Islam as an object of scientific study with two dimensions: transcendent (derived from revelation) and immanent. The objects of Islamic study include Islamic sources, Islamic doctrine, Islamic rituals and institutions, Islamic history, schools of thought and figures of thought, regional studies, and language (NASEH, 2018).

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that examines the nature of being, reality, and the deepest essence of something. In the philosophy of science, ontology occupies a fundamental position because it determines the boundaries, scope, and formal object of a science. When applied to Islamic studies, ontology not only discusses existence in general but also answers philosophical questions regarding the nature of Islam, the structure of reality recognized in Islam, and the relationship between primary entities such as God, revelation, humanity, and the universe (Mamonto, 2023). Thus, the ontology of Islamic studies can be understood as a conceptual framework that explains what Islam is and how it is present in the reality of human life.

Islamic studies essentially encompasses two main dimensions: normative-transcendental and historical-empirical. The normative-transcendental dimension refers to Islam as a divine teaching derived from revelation and is absolute, while the historical-empirical dimension refers to the practice of Islam as practiced by humans within social, cultural, and historical contexts. Ontology serves to bridge these two dimensions so that Islamic studies do not fall into partial approaches, either textual-doctrinal or merely empirical-

descriptive (Ulum, Azizah, & Utami, 2024). In other words, ontology ensures that Islamic studies have a strong philosophical foundation, so that every epistemological and axiological construction can be supported by an understanding of the reality of Islam itself.

Several recent studies emphasize that the ontology of Islamic studies is not only theoretically but also practically important. From an educational perspective, ontology is used to explain the nature of humans as innate beings, as well as how Islamic values should be internalized through the teaching and learning process. This is evident in the research of Mujiburrohman and Luthfi (2025), which shows that an ontological understanding of humans and morality is a crucial foundation for teaching Islamic values in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Thus, the ontology of Islamic studies is not merely an abstract concept but also provides concrete direction for the practice of Islamic education.

Furthermore, ontological studies also provide a philosophical framework for addressing contemporary challenges. In the digital and globalized era, Islamic values face various challenges, ranging from the relativism of truth, the penetration of global culture, to the secularization of thought. In this context, ontology serves as a philosophical foundation, affirming that Islamic reality cannot be reduced to a mere social phenomenon but rather possesses a transcendental dimension that remains relevant to addressing modern challenges (Sholicha & El-Yunusi, 2024). In fact, a comparison of ontological concepts in Islam and the West, such as an examination of al-Farabi's hierarchy of being, opens up space for enriching ontological discourse in Islamic studies, making it more adaptive and dialogical (Bahri, Handoko, & Udin, 2024).

Based on the above description, it can be emphasized that the ontology of Islamic studies is a philosophical study of the essence of Islamic existence, encompassing normative-transcendental and historical-empirical entities, as well as the relationship between God, revelation, humanity, and nature, which serves as the foundation for the epistemology and axiology of Islamic scholarship. This understanding is an important foundation for developing a holistic, non-partial Islamic study capable of responding to the challenges of the times.

2. Object of Ontological Study in Islamic Studies

The formal object of Islamic studies is the teachings and manifestations of Islam, studied scientifically. Its material objects encompass all aspects of life regulated by Islam: faith, sharia, morals, history, politics, economics, and culture. The ontology of Islamic Studies seeks to answer questions such as: what is called the reality of Islam, how Islam is understood as a system of knowledge and civilization, and to what extent revelation can be studied scientifically without losing its divine value. (Firdaus et al, 2022)

The ontology of Islamic studies focuses on understanding the nature, existence, and structure of reality, which underlie Islamic teachings. As a branch of philosophy, ontology asks "what exists" and "how that existence is understood." In the Islamic context, the objects of study include revelation, humanity, nature, and socio-historical reality, all of which are based on the principle of monotheism (El-Yunusi et al., 2023). Thus, Islamic ontology is not merely theoretical but also applicable in developing paradigms for science, education, and the lives of the people.

Revelation is the primary object of Islamic ontology because it functions as a source of transcendental knowledge and absolute reality that guides

humans in understanding the essence of life (Toto & Asror, 2024). Revelation is not merely a normative text, but rather a guide that reveals humanity's relationship with God and nature. Meanwhile, humans are viewed as multidimensional beings—physical and spiritual, rational and spiritual—who have the responsibility of acting as caliphs on earth (Nikmatullah, 2024). Nature is also a crucial part of the Islamic ontological framework because it is understood as a sign of God's greatness (ayat kauniyah) that must be protected and utilized wisely (Prihanta et al., 2024). Furthermore, socio-historical reality is also crucial, as Islam exists within the context of a constantly changing society, thus requiring an understanding of cultural and civilizational dynamics (Ikhsan et al., 2023).

The relationship between revelation and reason is at the heart of the debate in Islamic ontology. Revelation is seen as the source of absolute knowledge, while reason is the means for understanding and actualizing it in real life (Royani et al., 2024). The two are not contradictory, but rather complementary. Revelation provides direction to truth, while reason functions to interpret and apply it according to the social context. The integration of the two produces a distinctive Islamic epistemology—a blend of rationality and spirituality. This balance prevents knowledge from falling into valueless rationalism or rigid textualism (Mamonto, 2023).

In the modern era, the ontology of Islamic studies has become highly relevant because it provides a philosophical foundation for the development of knowledge and morality. Ontology helps address the challenges of globalization, spiritual crisis, and the misuse of technology by emphasizing that knowledge must be directed toward human well-being, not merely material interests (Bahri et al., 2024). In Islamic education, an ontological approach helps balance cognitive and spiritual aspects, shaping students with character, ethics, and a monotheistic perspective. Thus, the ontology of Islamic studies plays a crucial role in maintaining the balance between revelation, reason, and social reality, ensuring that Islamic knowledge and civilization remain relevant and meaningful to modern human life.

CONCLUSION

The ontology of Islamic studies is a philosophical foundation that examines the essence of Islamic reality in its various dimensions: transcendental, anthropocentric, cosmological, and socio-historical. Through this perspective, Islam is understood not only as a normative teaching derived from revelation, but also as a dynamic and contextual phenomenon of human life. The objects of ontological study include revelation, humanity, nature, and society, all viewed within the framework of monotheism as the primary principle.

The relationship between revelation and reason is a crucial pillar in the ontology of Islamic studies. Revelation serves as the absolute foundation, while reason serves as an interpretive instrument that enables divine messages to remain relevant throughout the ages. The synergy between the two emphasizes the uniqueness of Islamic epistemology, which integrates transcendental and rational dimensions.

In the contemporary era, the ontology of Islamic studies demonstrates its relevance in several aspects: strengthening the identity of Islamic scholarship amidst the dominance of Western paradigms, responding to the educational and moral challenges of the millennial generation, ethically guiding the development of science and technology, and fostering social integration in a pluralistic

society. Thus, ontology serves not only as an academic conceptual framework but also offers practical solutions to the challenges of the times.

Therefore, the development of ontology-based Islamic studies is an urgent need to realize integrative, humanistic, and transformative knowledge. The ontology of Islamic studies is not merely a philosophical discourse, but rather a foundation for reconstructing an Islamic scientific paradigm that is relevant to global dynamics while remaining grounded in the principle of monotheism. (Sabil, 2014)

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